

APPLICANT FEEDBACK SUMMARY

2013 AmeriCorps State and National Grant Competition

Legal Applicant: Public Allies, Inc.

Application ID: 13ES145630

Program Name: Public Allies Milwaukee

For the purpose of enhancing our programs by improving the quality and quantity of applications to the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), we are providing specific feedback regarding the strengths and weaknesses of this application. These comments are not meant to represent a comprehensive assessment; rather the analysis represents those elements that had the greatest bearing on the rating of the application. Please note that this feedback consists of summary comments from more than one reviewer. For this reason, some of the comments may seem to be inconsistent or contradictory. Comments are not representative of all of the information used in the final funding decision.

Reviewers' Summary Comments:

(+) According to American Community Survey 43% of youth under the ages of 18 live in poverty. Along with these poverty rates, the median income of households in Milwaukee has stagnated to \$33,000. In 2000 the median income was \$42,144. This actually means that family income is losing.

(+) There is definitely a need to help increase the capacity of local nonprofit organizations in Milwaukee. According to the December 2011 Report Card on Charitable Giving for metropolitan Milwaukee including a survey of 95 area nonprofits, most nonprofit organizations are experiencing an increase in a demand for service. Many reported this to be a challenge.

(+) The applicant has described the services need that has increased in the community over the last five years. They have described how the 3,400 current charities are stressed due to significant loss in revenue streams and an increased demand for services. They indicate that many of the supporting charitable organizations have had to reduce staff and services at a time of increasing demand.

(+) The applicant has linked the needs of the community with their goals for increasing the capacity of the organizations to provide more efficient and effective services and to improve the leadership skills of the disconnected youth within the community.

(+) The applicant cites 15,000 youth in the target area who are not attending school, not working, and who have no degree beyond high school and indicates that the economic and social costs related to this population are very high. This is strong evidence of the need for youth development services.

(+) Members would serve to develop volunteer recruitment and management plans; improve language access efforts of the organization; diversify program clientele; develop and implement an assessment plan that will collect feedback on the types of additional health education topics that would be of interest and benefit to the Prescription Advocacy and Referral Service clients; research service providers for training and make recommendations on the topics to be offered as special health education programs.

- (+) The applicant has described the roles that the AmeriCorps members will participate in within the grant programming. The activities target the areas of economic opportunity improvement and capacity building. These activities include planning and implementing new services, assisting organizations to bring their services to more community members, recruiting more volunteers, and assisting organizations refine and make their procedures more efficient and effective. Specific examples of activities include: developing volunteer recruitment and management plans for the Milwaukee Center, assisting the Riverworks Development Corporation deliver services to additional clients, and developing assessment plans for the Social Development Commission.
- (+) The applicant provides a thorough explanation and specific examples of how Members' service in partner agencies will increase those agencies' ability to increase efficiency, effectiveness, and/or ability to reach new target populations.
- (+) The applicant further documented the need for nonprofits in Milwaukee to increase capacity to serve increasing numbers of clients with decreasing funds; a need the applicant feels can be addressed through the use of AmeriCorps members.
- (+) The applicant provided past examples of the types of service projects which increased organizational capacity; e.g. development of a volunteer recruitment plan, improving language access through redesign of organizational recruitment and program materials, design of an outreach plan to diversify program clientele and development and implementation of an assessment plan allowing the collection of feedback on health education topics.
- (+) The applicant is using both evidence-based and evidence-informed data for the intervention of AmeriCorps members and volunteers. For example, in a study done by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation they found that program quality improved, organizations became more strategic with programs, and community support increased through the use of capacity-building strategies.
- (+) The applicant has a solid reputation and experience in providing similar programming and services. They have an established organizational structure and training plans that will assist in insuring that the AmeriCorps members will have an impactful and positive personal experience and one that has the potential to impact the community as well.
- (+) The applicant cites recent research supporting the effectiveness of youth development programs like the applicant's, which provide opportunities for service, training, coaching, and experiential learning.
- (+) Performance data from 2011-12 indicate that 100% of partner agencies reported that Members met or exceeded their expectations to carry out capacity-building activities.
- (+) The applicant's evidence-informed performance data show high participation and response rates among their partner organizations when answering questions about effectiveness of Member roles. For example, a David and Lucile Packard Foundation OE Goldmine Research Project report October 2011 shows an overwhelming 53% of organizations believe that their capacity increased because of AmeriCorps members.
- (+) The applicant cited data on the positive impact on organizational effectiveness using capacity-building strategies,

when applied intentionally, taken from a survey conducted by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation of grantees which had received their Organizational Effectiveness grants.

(-) The applicant states that the community members continue to struggle to meet their basic needs, but does not provide an in depth description of what this would mean for the communities and the subsequent AmeriCorps programming.

(-) The application does not specify how the varying MSY slot types will be utilized.

(-) The applicant did not provide detailed descriptions of what could not be established without the additional AmeriCorps member services in this grant project in relation to the demand for charitable services in the community.

(-) The applicant did not show how Members' roles and responsibilities will positively impact Milwaukee's most challenging issues because they were broad assertions based on self-reported surveys from partner organizations during previous years.

(-) The applicant did not demonstrate a strong link between opportunity youth, employment and increased organizational capacity.

(-) The applicant did not provide sufficient specific information on how partner organizations will increase their service.

(-) The applicant is not clear on the measurable community impact that they hope will occur as a result of the grant project. Their focus appears to be on enhancing the ability of nonprofit partners to engage and manage volunteers along with streamlining the efficiency of the agency processes as well as engaging the AmeriCorps volunteers in these processes as much as empowering the AmeriCorps members to provide service-oriented activities for Members of the community.